

**National
Society
for the
Prevention
of Blindness**

1959 Annual Report



ENOS CURTIN
President



JOHN W. FERREE, M.D.
Executive Director



President's Letter

IN REVIEWING the accomplishments of the Society during 1959 it is evident that the gains made are largely due to the teamwork of the thousands of professional and lay volunteers throughout the country who multiply the effectiveness of the Society's professional staff many times over.

Although the battle against the leading causes of blindness has been won on some fronts, for example against ophthalmia neonatorum, retrothalental fibroplasia, infectious diseases and trachoma, we are still faced with the great challenge—

***HALF OF ALL BLINDNESS IS
NEEDLESS AND PREVENTABLE***

To meet this challenge we must reach our country's 180 million with the message of eye health and safety. This is most successfully done through building a strong concept of what can be done to prevent blindness at the local level, through our chapters and committees. What people think about us, the measure of their support and goodwill, is based largely on impressions gained locally. A strong public education program depends on developing effective two-way communication at the community level.

Much work also needs to be done to find the underlying causes of the blinding diseases which are still unknown and to reduce preventable eye injuries.

To the many individuals, foundations and industries whose gifts sustain the work of the Society we are deeply grateful.

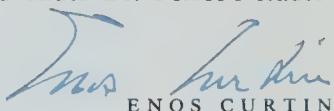
The opportunity to participate again in the Federal Service Campaign of National Health Agencies, enabling us to solicit funds from federal employees, has provided much-needed support for the program both locally and nationally.

We have developed cooperation with many agencies whose programs relate to our field of activity since only by a concerted effort can we achieve progress.

In reporting on the year's work I wish to pay tribute to the invaluable service and inspiring leadership of Ira V. Hiscock, Sc.D., who served as president of the Society during 1958 and 1959. Doctor Hiscock, upon accepting the Carnegie Visiting Professorship in public health at the University of Hawaii, resigned as president but continues to serve on the Board.

After thirteen years of untiring and devoted service as executive director, Dr. Franklin M. Foote left the Society in July to become commissioner of the Connecticut State Department of Health. He was succeeded by Dr. John W. Ferree who assumed this post on September 14th. Dr. Ferree, former associate medical director of the American Heart Association, has had an impressive record of achievement in community health. His excellent medical preparation, interest in people and years of experience in community organization fully qualify him for his new responsibilities.

We believe that the Society will continue to grow and will be increasingly recognized under Dr. Ferree's leadership.



ENOS CURTIN

Highlights of the Year

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS was made during 1959 in early detection of eye trouble among all ages, prevention of eye accidents, support of research in the blinding eye diseases; also in expansion of eye care education and increased services for the partially seeing.

*Some of the year's
outstanding achievements . . .*

More than 58,000 youngsters between the ages of three and six living in 22 states received eye tests given by volunteers trained by the Society's staff. Over five per cent were referred for eye care. Neglect of the eye trouble discovered might well have resulted in permanent loss of vision.

Community-wide programs aimed at finding men and women with early signs of glaucoma were sponsored in 14 states. Much has been accomplished through the excellent cooperation of health departments, Lions Clubs and other civic organizations. Data gathered by the Society showed that one person in 50 over the age of forty has this insidious eye disease which leads to blindness if untreated. Early detection and continuous care are needed to arrest its progress.

During the year 2,300 members were enrolled in the Wise Owl Club of America, the industrial eye safety incentive plan sponsored by the Society. In the ten-year period of the Club's operation 23,106 eyes have been saved by its members who have conscientiously



During 1959 volunteers screened 58,000 preschool children in many cities throughout the United States.



Florence Donermeyer received Teacher of the Year Award for her work with the partially seeing.

worn eye protection on the job. This represents a saving in minimum average compensation of \$92,404,000. The savings in human suffering, medical costs and lost production are incalculable.

A new industrial eye safety film, "It's Up to You" presented by the Wise Owl Club and sponsored by the National Society, dramatizes the story of a worker and the price he paid for a moment's thoughtlessness in removing his safety glasses in the plant. This film has been enthusiastically received by industry, not only in the United States, but in far off places such as Australia and South Africa.

In 1959 grants for research in the cause and treatment of blinding eye diseases were increased more than 80 per cent over the previous year.

A Winifred Hathaway Award to honor teachers who have made outstanding contributions to the education of partially seeing children has been established, to be made annually. The award is in recognition of Mrs. Hathaway's inspiring and dynamic pioneer leadership in providing special educational facilities for these children. She served as associate director of the Society for 24 years and is internationally known as the author of "Education and Health of the Partially Seeing Child." A revised edition of this standard text, made possible by a grant from the David Warfield Fund through the New York Community Trust, was completed in 1959 and was published for the Society by Columbia University Press.



New NSPB film dramatizing high cost of industrial eye accidents has been widely distributed.

Miss Florence Donermeyer of Oak Park, Illinois, was announced the winner of the Winifred Hathaway Award for 1959. She began her teaching career in Wisconsin and came to Oak Park, Illinois' public school system 17 years ago, 15 of which have been in special education.

The message of eye health and safety was directed to the man in the street through newspaper columns, magazine articles, radio and television; through exhibits, correspondence and talks to a wide variety of audiences. Through these media a conservative estimate indicates that more than 20 million persons were reached.

Research

Research — the key to conquest of blinding eye diseases.

ELECTRORETINOGRAPHY



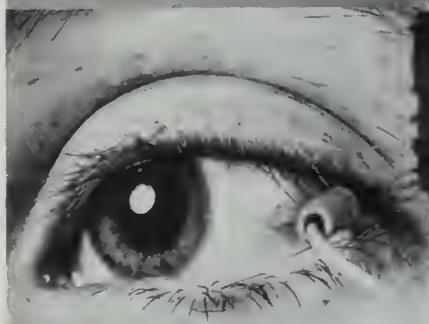
The function of normal retina in a short burst of light consists of initiating a more prolonged process to move and direct a and return a stimulus, whose position is given to the a and b waves.

In all cases of retinitis pigmentosa, until recently, the a and b waves were absent or very small. Recently, however, the hereditary nature of this extinguished ERG has been found to be important before the appearance of any clinical signs of retinitis pigmentosa.

In visual dysfunction there is a relative decrease in the amplitude of the prospective b wave as it becomes more and more prominent.

In a case of cataract the ERG is reduced as proportionately as the severity of the lesion.

The ERG is of value in determining the extent of retinal damage in other eye diseases, particularly in macular degeneration. Recent studies have shown that this macular function may be assessed by the ERG.



DESPITE THE MANY ADVANCES that have been made in treatment and prevention of eye disease there still remain many problems to solve. Three of these relate to cataract, glaucoma and uveitis, all important causes of blindness.

The Society's Research Committee continues to allocate funds to support clinical and laboratory investigations which will add to knowledge about diagnosis and treatment. The generosity and interest of the E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation made possible substantial increases in the 1959 research grants.

The Society recognizes the need to learn more about causes of blindness throughout the world. Its Committee on Statistics of the Blind has worked with the International Association for the Prevention of Blindness toward development of an international classification of these causes that will give us the information needed.

A survey of the eye programs in plants sponsoring chapters of the Wise Owl Club was initiated during the year. The objective is to determine the extent of these activities and their effect on the eye injury rate. A report of these findings will be of great value in strengthening the entire industrial sight conservation program.

1959 RESEARCH GRANTS

INSTITUTION / Investigation

WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, ST. LOUIS
Retinal Conditions

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, OMAHA
Blindness from Diabetes

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY POST GRADUATE MEDICAL SCHOOL, NEW YORK
Corneal Preservation

MASSACHUSETTS EYE & EAR INFIRMARY, BOSTON
Ways to Improve Management of Glaucoma

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MEDICAL CENTER, SAN FRANCISCO
Ocular Allergic Diseases in Children

UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO, SAN FRANCISCO
Ways of Teaching Tonometry

NEW YORK EYE AND EAR INFIRMARY, NEW YORK
Feasibility of an Artificial Photoelectric Eye

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL BRANCH HOSPITALS, GALVESTON
Eye Tissue Culture

CASTENAR GENERAL HOSPITAL, CASTENAR, PUERTO RICO
Glaucoma Detection

MEDICAL COLLEGE OF VIRGINIA, RICHMOND
Intraocular Tumors

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MEDICAL CENTER, LOS ANGELES
Alpha-Chymotrypsin as an Aid to Lens Extraction

TULANE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCHOOL, NEW ORLEANS
Therapeutic Studies in Experimental Ocular Burns

CORNELL UNIVERSITY MEDICAL COLLEGE, NEW YORK
Blood Osmolality Alterations and Effects on Intraocular Pressure

STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK, SYRACUSE
Etiology and Pathogenesis of Uveitis

YALE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE, NEW HAVEN
Effect of New Drugs on Zonules

ALBANY MEDICAL COLLEGE, ALBANY
Serological Studies of Cause of Iridocyclitis



tended. Local participation is essential in achieving maximum results.

Important progress has also been made in professional education during 1959. Members of the Society's staff participated in numerous institutes, workshops and professional meetings in every section of the country. These meetings alerted physicians, teachers, nurses, social workers and safety personnel to opportunities for saving sight in their professional capacities.

The eye problems of school children were discussed by authorities from various parts of the country in a workshop sponsored by the National Society and the Texas Ophthalmological Association with the assistance of the Texas State Department of Health. This type of discussion and joint planning is valuable in expanding and improving services.

Surveys have indicated that one child in 500 of school age has such a serious visual handicap that he requires special facilities and planning in order to benefit as much as possible from the opportunity for education. At present 8,000 of these children are receiving the attention required but at least 74,000 more lack the advantages of large-type materials, specially trained teachers and classrooms with recommended equipment and environment. The unmet needs of the partially seeing child are a major concern of the Society.

In order to meet the urgent need for teachers to work with partially seeing children throughout the United States the Society has established a fund for scholarships to cover the preparation.

THROUGH THE increasingly effective participation of chapters and committees of the National Society during 1959 thousands of communities over the country have been alerted to the possibilities of sight conservation. A wide range of prevention activities has been carried on at the local level: screening men, women and children for early signs of eye trouble; stimulating expansion of services for partially seeing children and adults; gaining support for legislation. These have had a strong impact and public education has been greatly ex-

The Society recently was able to present testimony before a Congressional Sub-committee on Special Education under the chairmanship of Representative Carl Elliott of Alabama which has been conducting a two-year study to determine the unmet needs in this field. This opportunity was particularly important in relation to those children who have better than 20/200 vision but whose visual handicaps are serious enough to interfere with their educational progress or vocational adjustment. Such children are not at present included under benefits for the legally blind, yet they need special educational facilities.

The participation of the Society in The White House Conference on Children and Youth, whose purpose is to "promote opportunities for children and youth to realize their full potential for a creative life in freedom and dignity," provides a major opportunity to alert thousands of key people to their responsibility for safeguarding the sight of children.

For the seventh consecutive year the annual glaucoma discussion meeting sponsored by the Society's Committee on Glaucoma was held in connection with the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology & Otolaryngology. There were 71 ophthalmologists from 21 states and 3 foreign countries in attendance. Subjects covered in the program were: research in glaucoma detection methods; a community-wide glaucoma screening program and interpretation of the results of tonography, a diagnostic test.



Special education facilities for partially seeing children are important in furthering their education.



At medical conferences general practitioners are alerted to the need for routine glaucoma testing.

Preventive Services



Through mass screening projects in many communities early cases of glaucoma are detected.



Consultant and information service on eye problems.



More than 19,000 workers whose protective eyewear has saved their sight are members of the Wise Owl Club.

BEFORE THE CHILD enters school much of what is learned of his environment and relationship to it is through the visual process. An eye defect unknown to the child's parents may so adversely affect his performance in comparison with other children of his age as to leave a lasting imprint.

The Society has long advocated the inclusion of vision testing in the total health supervision of the preschool child. During 1959 new preschool vision screening projects were initiated in Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Massachusetts, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas. A volunteer who participated in one of these projects expressed her reaction to it in this way:

"When you find even one eager little person who is missing so much of the world around him, or straining to do what is normal for another, or who might lose a year in school because an "a" and an "e" look alike to him, how can anyone but feel the job is worth the effort and very gratifying."

The Society continued to work closely with the agencies and personnel responsible for the eye health of school children. It is estimated that approximately 10 million of school age are in need of eye care. Through participation in professional meetings, through correspondence and distribution of pamphlets, school personnel has been alerted to the signs of eye trouble; to the need for eye safety and to recognize environ-

mental factors important to the care and comfort of seeing in the classroom.

It is estimated that 300,000 industrial eye accidents still occur in the United States each year despite the programs aimed at their elimination. Eye safety is being advanced through the incentive program known as the Wise Owl Club of America, sponsored by the Society. To qualify for admission to this club a worker must have saved his sight through conscientious wearing of eye protection at the time a work accident occurred.

To protect the eyes of vocational students from hazards to which they are exposed, teachers and students are urged to use the same protective equipment in school shops as is provided in industry.

During 1959 glaucoma detection programs were carried on by chapters and committees of the Society in the following states: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Wisconsin. In addition, advice and service were provided in establishing such programs in four other states: Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, Tennessee.

Consultation and information service to individuals with eye problems continued to be a major activity. Thousands of men and women were directed by the Society during 1959 to sources of advice on the many aspects of eye care. The importance of this service can be understood if one imagines the reaction of a parent of a child whose crossed eyes

Vocational students learn the value of safety glasses.



PREVENTIVE SERVICES (continued)

have been corrected; or that of a person who has had his sight restored after being blind from cataracts.

Quoted from a welcome letter recently received at the National Society headquarters are the following paragraphs:

"I wish to thank you very much for your very kind and helpful letter of March 19, 1959, in response to my inquiry about glaucoma. Also the pamphlet, which I have read over several times. Also, I forwarded your letter and the pamphlet to a friend of mine who also has this disease so that she might also benefit from it. In addition, I showed this to my Doctor so that he would know how your Society is working toward alerting people with this disease to the importance of cooperating with the doctor.

"My doctor seems to be very efficient and is giving me lots of attention and I am cooperating to the utmost and will continue to do so. He told me the last time I was in that when I first went to him the tension in my eyes measured 59 and when I last went in it was down to 21,

which is normal and he was very pleased . . .

"As I have contributed from time to time to your Society, it was most gratifying for me to learn that anyone can obtain the help from you that I have. It is too bad that everyone who is told they have glaucoma cannot be furnished with one of your pamphlets so that they will fully understand the seriousness of this disease. My mother's experience with glaucoma had alerted me to it so that I had read considerably about it through the past ten years and I also was aware of the seriousness of getting to the doctor the minute I, myself, had indications of this trouble. Most people have never heard of it until they are told they have it."

Through a substantial grant from the Knights Templar Eye Foundation it was possible to strengthen the year's preventive services. The continued support of the New York Community Trust from the estate of Mildred Anna Williams has also enhanced this aspect of the work.

The generosity of the Peter C. Cornell Trust helped greatly in extending the Society's glaucoma program.

MEMORIAL GIFTS **...to light the way for others**

AN IMPORTANT PART of the National Society's work is made possible by legacies from men and women who thoughtfully choose this way of providing for the welfare of those who live after them.

To assure continuing financial support for this vital sight-saving program a brief statement expressing your wishes may be included in your will:

"I give and bequeath to the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc., a corporation under the laws of the State of New York, the sum of _____ for its corporate purposes."

The Memorial Gift Plan offers an appropriate opportunity for making a "gift that serves" to mark a friend's birthday, recovery from illness or other special event. Gifts may also be made in this way on behalf of a deceased friend or relative in which case a memorial sympathy card is sent by the Society to the family or friends of the deceased.

Names of persons thus honored are inscribed in the Society's Book of Remembrance as a permanent record.

For details of the Memorial Gift Plan, or other information, write the National Society, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.

SOCIETY MEMBERSHIPS

BENEFACTOR	\$1,000 and over
PATRON	\$ 100 and over
SUSTAINING	\$ 50 and over
CONTRIBUTING	\$ 10 and over
SUBSCRIBING	\$ 5 and over
ASSOCIATE	\$ 2 and over

*The Board of Directors
National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc.*

We have examined the Statement of Income Expenditures and Resources of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness, Inc. for the year ended December 31, 1959. Our examination was made in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and accordingly included such tests of the accounting records and such other auditing procedures as we considered necessary in the circumstances. As to contributions and memberships, it was not practicable because of their nature to extend the examination beyond accounting, on a test basis, for the receipts as recorded.

The income, expenditures and resources of the state chapters of the National Society are not included in the accompanying statement nor were the financial statements of such chapters examined by us.

In our opinion the accompanying Statement of Income Expenditures and Resources summarizes fairly the financial transactions of the Society, excluding state chapters, for the year ended December 31, 1959, in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding year.

New York, New York

PEAT, MARWICK, MITCHELL & CO.

March 18, 1960

STATEMENT OF INCOME, EXPENDITURES AND RESOURCES - YEAR 1959

Total Resources at January 1, 1959 \$801,899.25

Expenditures

Research	\$ 71,203.12
Professional Education	102,103.28
Public Education in Eye Health	175,236.66
Program Development and Consultation	94,979.68
Industrial Program	35,895.01
Glaucoma Program	16,439.00
Program Support	81,385.73
Cooperative Projects with Other Agencies	2,661.00
International Activities	200.00
Administration	30,181.96
Pensions	4,138.32
Total Expenditures	614,423.76
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	\$187,475.49

Income

Contributions and Memberships	\$377,080.47
Publications, Wise Owl Club Memberships, Honoraria, etc.	34,906.13
Endowment and Reserve Funds	37,105.35
Trust Funds	14,967.85
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	\$464,059.80
Legacies and Security Transactions	140,195.94
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Total Income	604,255.74
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Total Resources at December 31, 1959	\$791,731.23

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness

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The work of the Society—research, education and preventive services covering all phases of sight conservation—is carried on by volunteers working with a paid professional staff qualified to deal with the many technical facts and procedures involved.

Members of the board of directors and of the various special committees who act as consultants on scientific and technical matters serve without remuneration. All budgets and expenditures are reported to the National Information Bureau which accredits national philanthropic agencies.

During 1959 the routine daily activities of the Society's staff included 187 field trips and 265 lectures; talks and demonstrations which reached an audience of approximately 12,000. More than 6,500 conferences were held. Some 40,000 letters were written.

There were numerous press interviews and radio and television appearances, and many showings of the Society's films.

Four issues of *Sight-Saving Review*, four issues of *Prevention of Blindness News*, and four issues of *Wise Owl News* were published during the year.

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness

1790 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y.